

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 01377 101634Z

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ACTION INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR, BE, GW

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON THEO DE DOBBELEER, NEXT BELGIAN
AMBASSADOR TO GERMANY

REF: BONN 1822

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL, FOLLOWING IS BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
ON DE DOBBELEER, SCHUURMANS' SUCCESSOR AS BELGIAN AMBASSADOR
TO GERMANY:

2. THEO DE DOBBELEER WAS BORN IN 1921 IN HALLE AND
ENTERED THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE IN 1946. AN EXPERIENCED CAREER
DIPLOMAT, HE HAS SERVED IN FRANKFURT FROM 1949-51, IN BONN
FROM 1951-56, DELHI FROM 1956-60, HAMBURG FROM 1960-63, AND
KINSHASA FROM 1963-66. SINCE 1966 HE HAS BEEN DIRECTOR
GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS.

3. DE DOBBELEER IS FLEMISH. IN ADDITION TO HIS NATIVE
DUTCH, HE SPEAKS FRENCH, GERMAN AND ENGLISH FLUENTLY. WE
HAVE FOUND HIM ACCESSIBLE, KNOWLEDGEABLE AND FORTHCOMING
ON THE WIDE RANGE OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC MATTERS UNDER HIS
DIRECTION. HE IS OUTSPOKEN AND BLUNT, BUT HE ALSO IS A
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 01377 101634Z

GOOD LISTENER AND WILLING TO GIVE FULL CONSIDERATION TO
AN OPPOSING POINT OF VIEW. BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE AND A

STRONG DEFENDER OF BELGIAN ECONOMIC INTERESTS, HE IS A SKILLED BUREAUCRAT, SELECTING HIS BATTLES WITHIN THE MINISTRY AND WITH THE DOMESTIC AGENCIES, SELECTIVELY.

4. HE HAS READY ACCESS TO THE TOP LEVELS OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT AND HAS BEEN INFLUENTIAL. HE HAS BEEN RESPONSIVE TO EMBASSY REPRESENTATIONS, WHEN HE HAS BEEN PERSUADED THAT THESE WILL ADVANCE BELGIAN ECONOMIC INTERESTS. INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM HIM HAS INVARIABLY BEEN RELIABLE AND WELL INFORMED.

5. DE DOBBELEER HAS TRAVELED WIDELY IN HIS PRESENT POSITION, INCLUDING THREE RECENT TRIPS TO CHINA, AND IS EAGER TO TALK ABOUT HIS IMPRESSIONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. HE IS GREGARIOUS, HAS A DRY SENSE OF HUMOR, AND POSSESSES THE TRADITIONAL BELGIAN INTEREST IN GOOD GOOD AND WINES. HIS WIFE, NICOLE, IS ATTRACTIVE AND OUTGOING, AND SPEAKS FLUENT ENGLISH. THEY HAVE TWO GROWN CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN. DE DOBBELEER IS AMBITIOUS IN THE BEST SENSE OF THE WORD AND IS LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS POSTING ABROAD AFTER NINE YEARS IN BRUSSELS. HE PLANS TO LEAVE FOR BONN ON MARCH 3. RENNER

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